52. Facilities for Punja Cultivation.

MR. CHACKO JOSEPH (*Member, Changanachery taluk, Group II*) said that rice was the staple food of the people of Travancore and that it was deplorable that the State had annually to import the major part of the supply required. This not only meant a considerable drain but caused acute and widespread distress as during the last war. Travancore should aim at being self-contained in the matter of paddy. Kuttanad and Nanjinad formed the two rice fields of the State; but while considerable expenditure had been incurred and was being incurred in the latter area, the former was comparatively neglected.

The construction of the Kuttapuzha canal, the usefulness of which had been urged more than once in the past sessions of the Assembly by the Members representing Changanachery and Tiruvalla taluks, had not yet been taken up. The opening of the canal would not only render annual cultivation possible on 20,000 *paras* of land and bring about an increased output of 3 lakhs of *paras* of paddy annually, but would also increase the productivity of extensive lands. The *punja* crops of Kaviyur were now being destroyed by floods almost every year. The opening of the canal would also prevent the damages annually caused to the Tiruvalla-Kozhenchery road. The Economic Development Board visited the locality some time back and had recommended the early execution of the work. The Member requested the Dewan to visit the place in company with the Chief Engineer and the Director of Agriculture and to sanction the immediate carrying out of this very useful work.

Most of the *punja* lands were cultivated only once in two years. The construction of a number of small canals would alone enable the ryots to cultivate the lands annually, as there was no scope now for irrigation and drainage. An irrigation department should be organised under the Director of Agriculture for this purpose.

The Irrigation Regulation passed eighteen years ago was inoperative in Kuttanad. Cultivation of extensive blocks was often rendered impossible by the neglect or indifference of one ryot who did not put up his bunds. The Tahsildars did not exercise the powers vested in them to get such work done. The powers under this Regulation should be suitably modified and vested in the officers of the Agricultural Department. Similar concerted action was also required in the matter of pumping water, and there should also be statutory provision for the realisation of cost from the owners holding lands in one block. The civil courts were unable to give timely or adequate remedy in these cases; and the Director of Agriculture should be invested with the necessary powers in this direction also.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Chacko Joseph, in regard to the Kuttapuzha canal, as you know, the scheme for constructing the canal was abandoned and then on the motion of the Economic Development Board, the question was taken up again and the Chief Engineer was instructed to investigate and submit proposals again. He has now got his report nearly ready and hopes it will reach the hands of the Government shortly, so that the Government will be able to take up the question and see whether it will be possible to carry it through. The other points will be considered carefully in consultation with the Director of Agriculture.

53. Improvement of Agriculture.

MR. S. KUMARAVELU PANIKKAR (*Member, Nominated*) brought to the notice of the Government the present condition of agriculture in the State and suggested certain measures for its improvement as also for the improved working of the Agricultural Department.

Firstly, he noticed the insufficiency and deterioration of cattle with special reference to Nagercoil town. The unsatisfactory condition of cattle was due to the absence of proper grazing grounds. In Nagercoil particularly, that was the case. The Silpasari tank, Tattiyarkulam, Edayarkulam, Savayarkulam and the Chayakkarankulam which were unfit for agricultural purposes should be converted into grazing grounds. Early orders should be passed on the Nagercoil Municipal President's communication to the Government on the subject. Slaughter of cows should be prohibited.

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